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Brainstorming

- **Brainstorming** is a group creativity technique by which efforts are made to find a conclusion for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by its members.
- In other words, brainstorming is a situation where a group of people meet to generate new ideas and solutions around a specific domain of interest by removing inhibitions. People are able to think more freely and they suggest as many spontaneous new ideas as possible.
- All the ideas are noted down without criticism and after the brainstorming session the ideas are evaluated. The term was popularized by Alex Osborn in the 1967 book *Applied Imagination*.

Alex Osborn, the Father of Brainstorming



Alex F. Osborn invented brainstorming in 1948. In the 1950s, Osborn and his colleagues were busy using brainstorming with companies such as General Motors, DuPont, and General Electric. Brainstorming is still widely used today. You can brainstorm any time you need a lot of ideas to help you come up with a new approach to some situation.

Development of Brainstorming

- Alex Osborn, the “O” in BBDO, is widely acknowledged as the father of brainstorming.
- Originally called “Think Up,” the term describes a process by which a group attempts to find a solution for a specific problem by amassing all the ideas spontaneously identified by its members. The rules of such a process include: no criticism of ideas, go for large quantities of ideas, build on each other’s ideas and encourage wild and exaggerated ideas.
- The term was invented in 1938 by Alex Osborn and became popularized in his book, “Applied Imagination,” which was published in 1953. It has since gone on to be widely embraced within the marketing and advertising communities.

Brainstorming

- Brainstorming combines a relaxed, informal approach to problem solving with lateral thinking. It encourages people to come up with thoughts and ideas that can, at first, seem a bit crazy.
- Some of these ideas can be crafted into original, creative solutions to a problem, while others can spark even more ideas. This helps to get people unstuck by "jolting" them out of their normal ways of thinking.
- Therefore, during brainstorming sessions, people should avoid criticizing or rewarding ideas. You're trying to open up possibilities and break down incorrect assumptions about the problem's limits. Judgment and analysis at this stage stunts idea generation and limit creativity.
- Evaluate ideas at the end of the session – this is the time to explore solutions further, using conventional approaches.

Purpose of Brainstorming

- Brainstorming is a way to generate ideas within a group setting. It is usually used in the beginning stages of a project, where the possibilities for the project are not clearly understood or defined. It provides a quick means for tapping the creativity of a limited number of people for a large number of ideas.
- The brainstorming environment fosters an uninhibited, non-judgmental explosion of ideas, concepts, policies, decisions, and strategies.

Purpose of Brainstorming

- In brainstorming, *all* contributions are valid, and the key to a successful session is to share as many ideas as possible without evaluating them.
- Brainstorming sessions can be unstructured - that is, there may not be a moderator or facilitator. Most sessions, however, are facilitated, structured discussions with guidelines to help the process move along smoothly and allow a variety of perspectives and ideas to surface.



Steps to Effective Brainstorming



Brainstorming



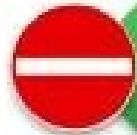
Set direction



Cross-fertilize



Stay focused



Suspend judgment



Involve everyone



Allow repetitions



Invite wild ideas



Don't stop

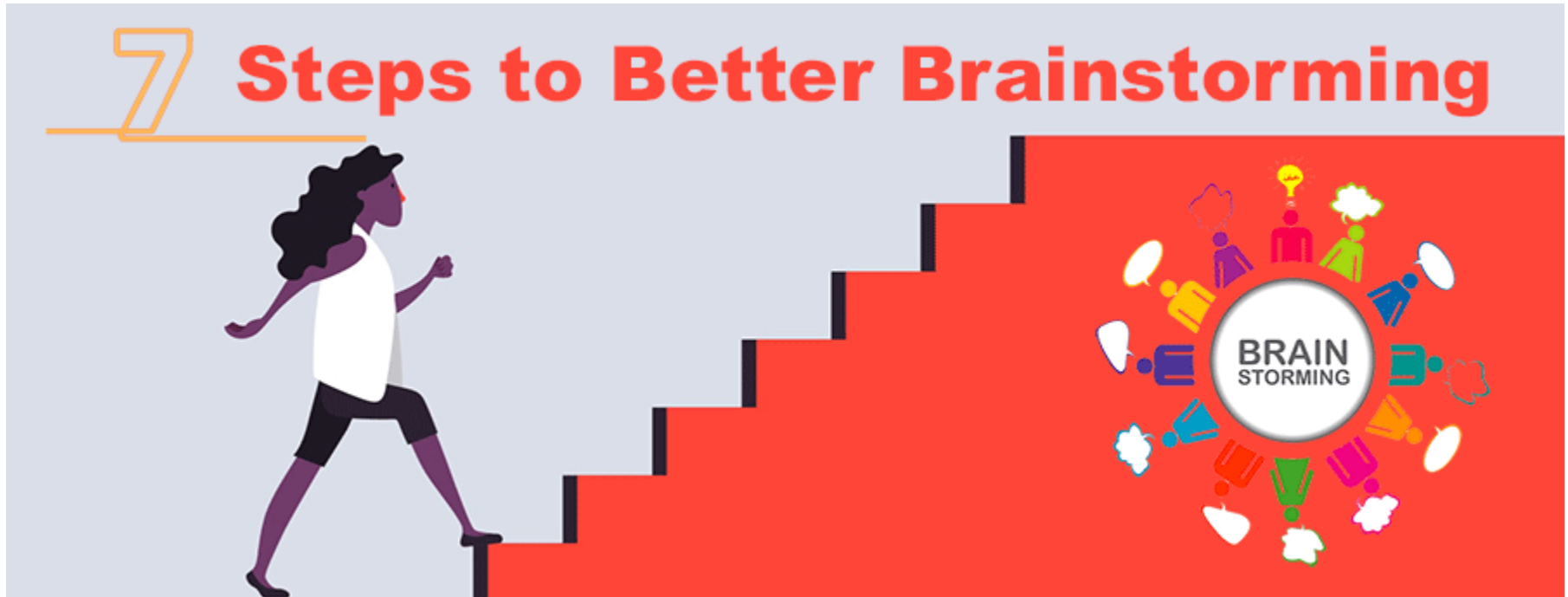


Look for obvious



Display ideas

7 Steps to Effective Brainstorming



7 steps to Effective Brainstorming

- Almost all businesses will engage in brainstorming activities at some point. However, if the process isn't managed correctly, it can quickly turn into a huge waste of time. Often, discussions can go off on tangents, circle the same ideas, or worse yet, they can lead to disagreements.
- For brainstorming to be successful, it needs to be effective and efficient. As well as focused on achieving clear goals and objectives.
- When we're brainstorming ideas with clients, we like to follow these simple steps:

7 Steps to Effective Creative Brainstorming

1. Identify Objectives. When identifying the objectives for a **brainstorming** session, it is always a good idea to think about the problems you are trying to solve. ...
2. Set a time limit. ...
3. Write Everything Down. ...
4. Be Open to the Ridiculous. ...
5. Avoid Group Think. ...
6. Get Specific. ...
7. Share the Results.

1. Identify Objectives

- When identifying the objectives for a brainstorming session, it is always a good idea to think about the problems you are trying to solve. You can do this by beginning with your wider business objectives and identifying priorities within this.
- Are there any business constraints that you need to address? Make a note of these and list them by importance, your top priority should be the focus of the brainstorming session. Once you have identified your focus, you should begin the brainstorming session by stating the overview and goals of the brainstorming session.
- Setting goals and objectives for your brainstorming sessions will help to create boundaries and keep the brainstorming session on track.

2. Set a time limit

- Setting a time limit for your brainstorming sessions can be helpful because it makes everyone aware that the goals of the session need to be met within a certain timeframe. This will help to keep discussions on topic and encourage team members to maintain momentum.
- How long your time frame needs to be will very much depend on the size and scope of the project. If you are working on a large project, it might be a good idea to split the brainstorming sessions by topic and spread them over several days. Or alternatively, you could split the team into groups to handle each topic in smaller teams.

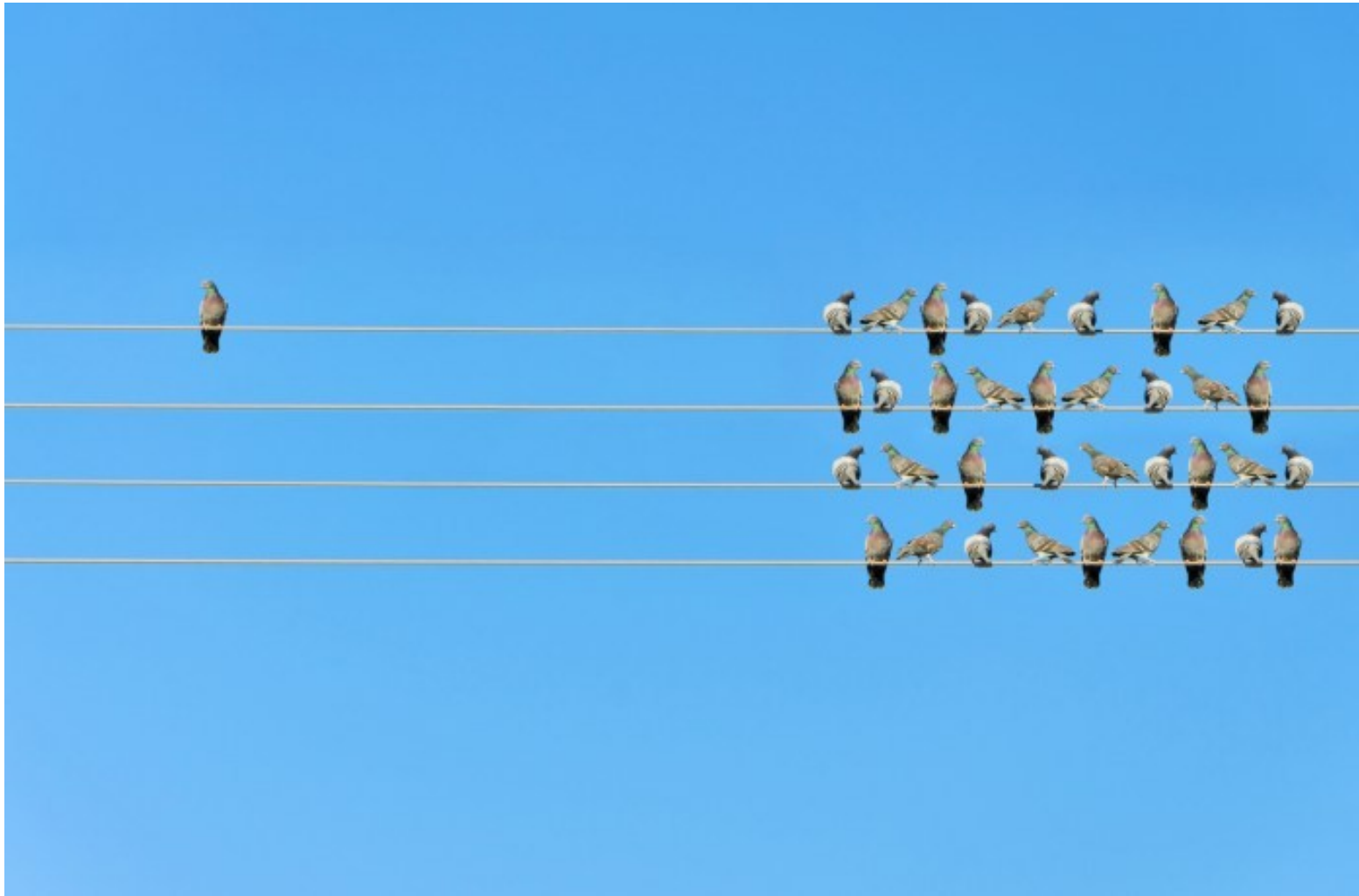
3. Write Everything Down

- When the ideas are flowing, it's important to keep track of everything that's said. You could do this by writing out post-it notes and spreading them out across a table or board. Or make use of a white board or flipchart in a meeting room.
- Make sure that you take a note of all ideas, both good and bad. Because you never know, with a little thought, the bad ideas could potentially turn into great ideas.
- When brainstorming, it can also be a good idea to make use of visual aids. Make sketches, create mood boards and get creative. You could even bring along items like building bricks, modelling clay, construction paper, etc., to aid the creative brainstorming process.
- It helps to communicate ideas visually because this gives the people around you the opportunity to visualise ideas and to come up with new interpretations.

4. Be Open to the Ridiculous

- Ever heard the saying that every idea is a good idea? Well, obviously this isn't strictly true, but in order for brainstorming sessions to work, this should be the prevailing attitude. And although not every idea will be a brilliant idea, a bad idea could provide the stimulus for a great idea. This is why even the most ridiculous ideas should be encouraged, to keep the creative process going.
- Being open to the ridiculous also helps to create a sense of ease within the brainstorming team. The worst thing that could happen, is for individuals to be reluctant to speak up, for fear of being ridiculed.

Avoid Group Think



5. Avoid Group Think

- **Groupthink** is the practice of thinking or making decisions as a group, resulting typically in unchallenged, poor-quality decision-making. It often occurs where a group of people conform, out of a desire for harmony. Individuals are reluctant to challenge ideas because they want to minimise conflict as much as possible.
- Groupthink is disastrous in terms of brainstorming because it creates a barrier to creative thinking and honest communication, while also preventing critical evaluation of ideas. Usually, in these situations, there will be one influential leader of the group, leading the discussions. While the rest of the group nods on in agreement.
- One way to minimise the impact of groupthink is to appoint a moderator to encourage critical evaluation, through positive reinforcement

6. Get Specific

- At the beginning of a brainstorming session, it is a good idea to take a scattergun approach to the ideas process. The idea is to create as many ideas as possible while exploring all avenues and possibilities.
- Once you have gathered plenty of ideas and you feel like you have considered all eventualities. You then need to hone in on the best ideas from this process. Begin by eliminating the least relevant ideas until you have a shortlist of the very best.
- You can then take your best ideas and begin exploring each of these in greater detail. You could do this by breaking into smaller groups, or by taking them one by one. This will help to identify the most viable suggestions from the session.

Share the Results



7. Share the Results

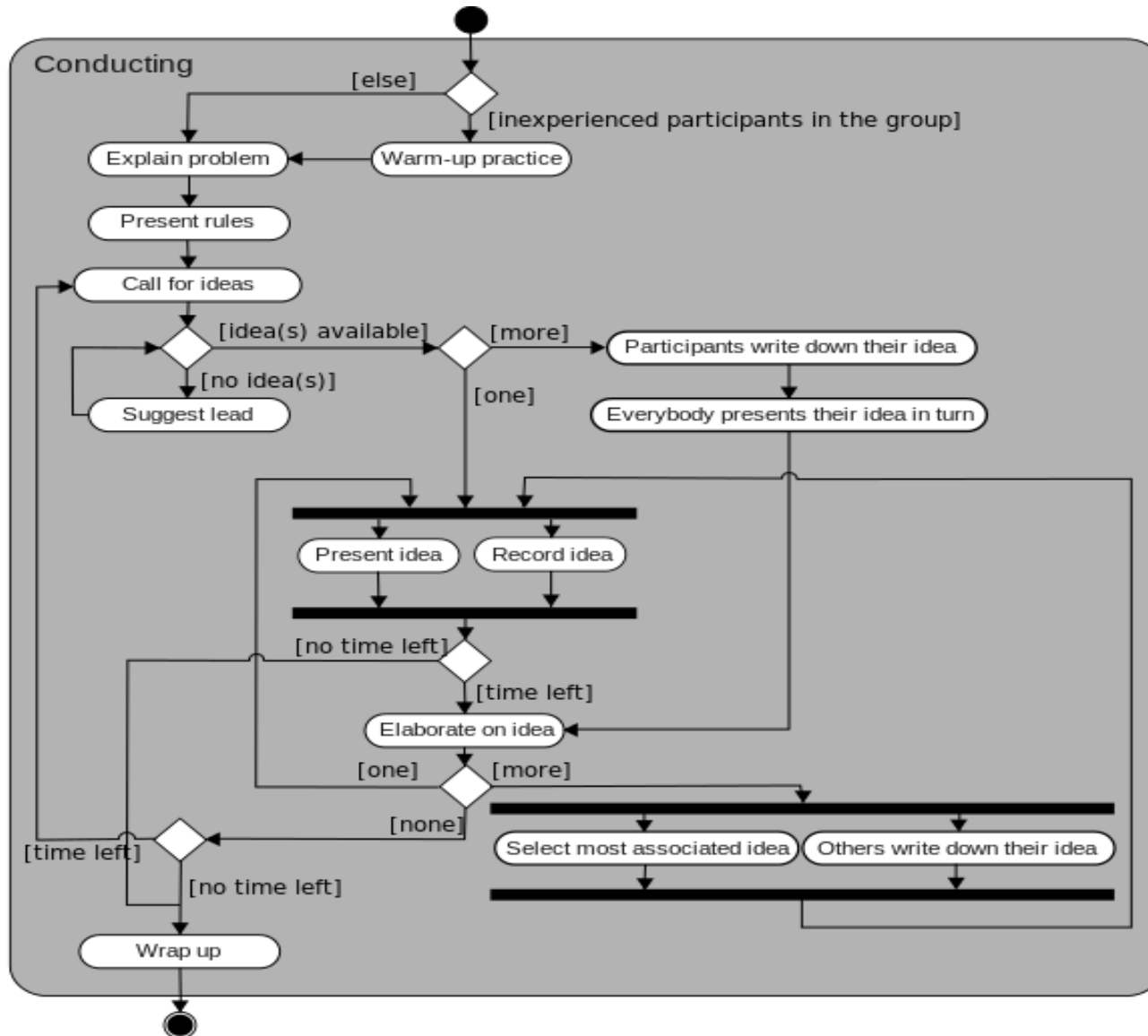
- Great ideas are usually the result of a huge team effort – they are inspired, shaped and influenced by a number of groups and individuals. This is why it's important for you to share the results of your brainstorming sessions outside the group.
- This will provide an opportunity for the ideas to be developed and refined even further, until they become a fully formed innovation.

Goals and Objectives of Brainstorming

Upon completion of this class, you will be able to:

- Describe the techniques of effective brainstorming
- Identify and use common brainstorming techniques and rules
- Explain the rules of brainstorming
- List and use the factors for effective brainstorming
- Evaluate and practice good brainstorming techniques
- Utilize a checklist to ensure brainstorming sessions are optimal experiences

Osborn's method



Brainstorming activity conducting

Osborn's method

Osborn claimed that two principles contribute to "ideative efficacy," these being:

- Defer judgment,
- Reach for quantity.

Following these two principles were his four general rules of brainstorming, established with intention to:

- reduce social inhibitions among group members,
- stimulate idea generation,
- increase overall creativity of the group.

Increase overall creativity of the group

- ✓ **Go for quantity:** This rule is a mean of enhancing divergent production, aiming at facilitation of problem solution through the maxim *quantity breeds quality*. The assumption is that the greater the number of ideas generated the bigger the chance of producing a radical and effective solution.

Increase overall creativity of the group

- ✓ **Withhold criticism:** In brainstorming, criticism of ideas generated should be put 'on hold'. Instead, participants should focus on extending or adding to ideas, reserving criticism for a later 'critical stage' of the process. By suspending judgment, participants will feel free to generate unusual ideas.

Increase overall creativity of the group

- ✓ **Welcome wild ideas:** To get a good long list of suggestions, wild ideas are encouraged. They can be generated by looking from new perspectives and suspending assumptions. These new ways of thinking might give you better solutions.

Increase overall creativity of the group

- ✓ **Combine and improve ideas:** As suggested by the slogan " $1+1=3$ ". It is believed to stimulate the building of ideas by a process of association.

Conclusion

- Brainstorming is well-known to yield a large quantity of ideas and generate high-quality solutions. More so, teams can leverage brainstorming using these brainstorming techniques. Truly, teams can get new ideas flowing and unleash truly creative ideas.

Individual brainstorming

- "**Individual brainstorming**" is the use of **brainstorming** in solitary situations. It typically includes such techniques as free writing, free speaking, word association, and drawing a mind map, which is a visual note taking technique in which people diagram their thoughts.

Thank you

